

Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan

Conceptual Plan Alternatives

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Principal Features			
	Concept Theme: What should Eau Claire do to promote a long-term, environmentally sound and cost-effective land use pattern for future growth in Eau Claire and across the metropolitan area?	Concept Theme: What should Eau Claire do to ensure a cost-effective and compatible land use pattern within the Urban Sewer Service Area over the next twenty years?	Concept Theme: What should Eau Claire do to minimize the costs of municipal services, especially costs related to fringe development?
1	<p>Eau Claire will take a lead role in shaping and promoting a consistent and integrated land use and growth pattern for itself and the metropolitan region that is environmentally sound and supports efficient and cost-effective development patterns designed for lasting value both inside and outside of the Eau Claire corporate boundaries.</p> <p>The City will prepare and promote a plan for land use, roads and utilities extending to the limits of its extraterritorial subdivision review area (three miles from its borders). In that area, rural areas will be preserved and protected. The City will seek to achieve that pattern either through intergovernmental agreement or, if that fails, through the powers allowed through extraterritorial subdivision review.</p> <p>The City will work with the private sector to make strategic investments in public facilities consistent with its comprehensive plan in order to maximize economic growth, property values and quality of life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>Eau Claire will follow State of Wisconsin planning requirements in adopting and implementing a comprehensive plan for the existing corporate boundaries and Urban Sewer Service Area.</p> <p>The City will protect its large investment in utilities and other services by preserving the Urban Sewer Service Area for eventual urban development.</p> <p>The City will aggressively control minimum lot size within the Urban Sewer Service Area to protect the area for eventual urban densities. However, the nature of development beyond the approved Urban Sewer Service Area is the responsibility of the county and towns.</p> <p>The City will participate in regional planning but will not expend major funds or resources to promote metropolitan interests as that is the responsibility of the County, the Regional Plan Commission, or the State.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will take a 'hands-off' approach to growth management and will rely on the workings of the private market to determine land use patterns in the metropolitan area.</p> <p>The City will extend municipal water and sewer services outside its boundaries as long as the developer or the Town pays the full cost of the extension.</p> <p>The City will support full build-out of vacant areas within its existing City boundaries as long as it does not have to provide any financial support or public improvements nor acquire any property.</p> <p>The City will seek to minimize the extension of existing City boundaries so as to minimize the need to expand the delivery of city services for public works and public safety.</p> <p>The City will meet the minimum legal requirements for comprehensive planning imposed by the state and seek to minimize code and ordinance restrictions on private development so that future development could occur with the least tax and regulation costs from the city.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>

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Major Assumptions

2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive local government is essential for effective planning. Regional planning is beneficial. The public and private sectors should collaborate. Intergovernmental cooperation can be achieved. Town governments will not be dissolved and will continue to play a role in providing services. Public facilities help the economy. Greater cooperation among governments will be needed to meet the needs of a growing population. Growth should be accommodated in sewered areas in and adjacent to Eau Claire. Prosperity is enhanced if growth is planned and managed. Redevelopment often requires public assistance. Environmental protection is desirable. Urban density is desirable. Current public service and revenue problems are temporary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government can be effective but should not overreach. The best geographic area for planning is the Urban Sewer Service Area. The City's interest extends only to the boundary of the Urban Sewer Service Area. Local planning is beneficial. The high number of local governments makes regional planning difficult in a metro area. Intergovernmental cooperation cannot be achieved. Boundary changes will be initiated by annexation petitions from property owners. Existing neighborhoods should be protected. There is no need for major planning policy changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That government which governs least governs best. The private sector is more effective than the public sector; government is ineffective and inefficient. Low taxes are very important. Local government services should be reduced. Avoiding conflict is important in intergovernmental relations. Individual prosperity is enhanced when government activity and spending are reduced. Land use should not be a government concern. Local government should only provide essential services such as fire, police and major roads. Individuals should be able to do what they want with their land. Environmental quality is secondary to provision of essential city services. Total local revenues will continue to decline.
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Land Use

	Major issue: What should Eau Claire do to protect the path of urban development from inappropriate and inefficient land use?					
3	Eau Claire will work to gain intergovernmental agreement on a metro land use concept that encourages compact and well-designed edge investments, economic extensions of municipal utilities and roads, staged annexation, and preservation of nearby rural character and productive farmland.		Eau Claire will meet its legal requirements in adopting and implementing a comprehensive plan for the existing corporate boundaries and Urban Sewer Service Area . This area will include the territory expected to be annexed and developed over the next 20 years.		The City will allow the private market and the Towns to determine the pattern of land use and lot sizes outside its borders.	
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4	<p>The City will prepare and promote a plan for land use, and the staged extension of roads and utilities to the limits of its extraterritorial subdivision review area (three miles from its borders). In that area, there should not be more than 2 houses per 40 acres until City sewer and water lines become available, then urban densities should be achieved.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will regulate minimum lot sizes in the Urban Sewer Service Area by requiring parcels of at least 10 acres in size unless on city sewer. However, the nature of development beyond the approved Urban Sewer Service Area is the responsibility of the counties and towns.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City of Eau Claire will prepare a comprehensive plan for its present jurisdiction that provides very general direction regarding land use patterns and development sequencing. The City will not dictate lot sizes or densities.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
5	<p>The City will seek to achieve its plan either through intergovernmental cooperation and agreement or, if that fails, through the powers allowed through extraterritorial subdivision review.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>Eau Claire will approve a general land use pattern for its Urban Sewer Service Area and will implement its plan in adjacent towns through extraterritorial subdivision review.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will pursue a “hands-off” approach regarding the land use patterns in adjacent towns and any regional or county planning process.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
6	<p>The City will encourage development that is generally more compact and dense than recent past patterns. Each new neighborhood will be designed to include some townhouses or other forms of attached housing.</p> <p>The City will provide plans, zoning, infrastructure and financing to leverage private reinvestment in established neighborhoods and the downtown.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will attempt to continue established trends and patterns of land use. Perimeter neighborhoods will be planned primarily for single-family detached houses although townhouses or apartments may be allowed in separate areas.</p> <p>The land use pattern in the existing neighborhoods may be altered through the normal public process for rezoning.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>Landowners and potential developers may be asked to submit land use designations for their properties that will be included on the plan map. The layout and land use of perimeter neighborhoods will be determined by the landowners and investors, and the City will review applications for rezoning, subdivision or conditional use for meeting service and safety standards.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
7	<p>The City will encourage annexation petitions consistent with an overall plan of staged and orderly development, including property that is not expected to be immediately developed, in order to effectively manage perimeter growth. The City will work to secure more compact development within the metro area.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will respond to petitions for annexation and approve those that are consistent with its plans and comply with statutory requirements.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will not approve any petitions for annexation that may result in a net increase in city service costs.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
8	<p>The City will support redevelopment through planning, zoning, direct financial subsidy and public improvements.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will support redevelopment through planning and zoning.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will support full build-out of vacant areas within its existing City boundaries as long as it does not have to provide any financial support or public improvements nor acquire any property.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>

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Utilities			
	Major issue: How should the City of Eau Claire use its utilities to manage growth?		
9	The City will negotiate agreements with surrounding jurisdictions to extend utilities within an expanding city limits to implement the Comprehensive Plan. 1 2 3	Eau Claire will continue its long-standing policy of providing sanitary sewer service only to properties within its jurisdiction (plus prior agreed areas) for the sake of fiscal health, redevelopment, and growth management. 1 2 3	The City will not extend sewer or water lines in order to minimize potential City cost increases unless the costs are fully paid up front for by the developers or adjacent jurisdiction. 1 2 3
10	The City will design, finance and build new utilities and roads so as to attract and guide growth in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. 1 2 3	Land developers will be responsible for improving or extending local and collector streets, minor utility lines, and for participating in the cost of improving arterial roads and trunk utility lines. 1 2 3	Land developers will be fully responsible for improving or extending local, collector and arterial roads and all utility lines needed to serve their properties. 1 2 3
11	Eau Claire will partner with the City of Altoona to upgrade the sewage treatment plant prior to 2020. 1 2 3	The City will upgrade and expand its sewage treatment plant by 2020 to accommodate planned growth within its Urban Sewer Service Area. 1 2 3	The City will continue to maintain and upgrade its sewer and water systems to meet federal or state standards. 1 2 3
12	The City will petition the Regional Plan commission for adjustments to the Urban Sewer Service Area to accommodate long-term growth forecasts and demands. 1 2 3	The City will request the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to amend the boundary of the Urban Sewer Service Area to reflect the fact that service will not be extended to the Village of Lake Hallie and to allocate sufficient additional acreage in the northwest, west and south to accommodate planned growth consistent with the <i>Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan</i> . 1 2 3	The City will propose that its Urban Sewer Service Area remain in its present configuration. 1 2 3

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Transportation			
	Major issue: What should the City do to ensure that future road improvements promote cost-effective growth?		
13	The City of Eau Claire will attract new investment to its western side and boost downtown redevelopment by financing the creation of an interchange at I-94 and Cameron Street. 1 2 3	The City will work with WisDOT to complete remaining programmed improvements such as the Birch Street bridge and the turn-back of Hastings Way to the City and the County. 1 2 3	The City will approve the work of WisDOT as it completes remaining programmed improvements such as the Birch Street bridge and the turn-back of Hastings Way to the City and the County. 1 2 3
14	Eau Claire will take an active role in helping the Regional Planning Commission formulate its next transportation plan for the Chippewa Falls – Eau Claire metropolitan area. 1 2 3	Eau Claire will provide input about its road and transit needs to the Regional Plan Commission as it formulates its next transportation plan. 1 2 3	The City will provide improvements to the major road network as needed to provide high levels of traffic movement. 1 2 3
15	The City will partner with the Regional Plan Commission and the Counties to increase transit services throughout the metropolitan area. 1 2 3	Eau Claire will maintain its present level of transit service. 1 2 3	Transit service will be pared back to include only the most heavily used routes. 1 2 3

Natural Resources			
	Major issue: What should Eau Claire do to strengthen its protection of environmental features such as steep, wooded slopes?		
16	The natural environment will be protected, showcased and used as an economic development incentive. The City will conduct resource management studies in response to problems or in conjunction with urban growth, and will update its plans or regulations in response to the outcome of those studies. 1 2 3	Wetlands, floodplains, shorelands and slopes in excess of 20 percent will be protected through the zoning and subdivision review process consistent with the <i>Urban Sewer Service Plan for 2010</i> . 1 2 3	Natural resources will be protected as required by the State. 1 2 3
17	Surface water will be planned and managed on a watershed basis. Additional public open space will be created along both rivers. 1 2 3	Surface water management will be emphasized in the city and the townships through a plan and management process that covers the city and its future growth area. 1 2 3	Wetland, floodplain and shoreland regulations will continue to be applied as required by the State. 1 2 3
18	Eau Claire will invest money in natural resource protection. 1 2 3	Eau Claire will plan and regulate for natural resource protection but look to the state for capital funding. 1 2 3	Land, water, woods and scenery will be protected through private actions and investments. 1 2 3

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19	The City will acquire land along rivers and creeks for natural open space and park use with planned access and trails. 1 2 3	The City will continue to work with private developers to set aside or dedicate land along rivers and creeks for natural open space. 1 2 3	Land along rivers and creeks will be developed as open space as needed by property owners as part of their development projects. 1 2 3

Parks			
	Major issue: How should the City meet the park and playground needs of existing and future residential neighborhoods?		
20	<p>The City should work to develop a comprehensive local and regional plan for parks, greenways and trails, with funding from the City, the Counties, other local communities and the State.</p> <p>The regional riverway system will be the central element of this long-term effort, which will be implemented in part by a regional park district.</p> <p>The City should continue to provide 5-10 acre playgrounds for every 4,000 persons.</p> 1 2 3	<p>The park system plan will be expanded to serve locations planned for residential development. Major athletic fields will be provided in the northern and southern sectors of the city for organized softball, baseball and soccer.</p> <p>The City should reduce the number of existing playgrounds and incorporate playgrounds for future neighborhoods into a system of larger community parks.</p> 1 2 3	<p>Public parks may be created by land developers if they judge them appropriate. Private parks and recreation facilities such as swimming pools may be built by land developers instead of public parks.</p> <p>The City should eliminate existing playground programs, and not build any additional neighborhood parks.</p> 1 2 3

Urban Design			
	Major issue: How should the City use site planning and design standards to regulate development?		
21	<p>The City will generally increase its regulatory oversight of design matters, both private and public.</p> 1 2 3	<p>The City will continue to apply the site design provisions of its zoning ordinance (which was amended and improved after the 1993 plan) to gradually create more attractive multi-family and commercial areas.</p> 1 2 3	<p>Decisions about the appearance of development will be the province of the landowner or developer. The City will require only those improvements necessary to safeguard public health and safety.</p> 1 2 3
22	<p>The existing <i>Multi-Family Housing Design Guidelines</i> will be made more comprehensive and woven into the zoning ordinance. The City will require infill and redevelopment buildings to be designed with sensitivity to their context.</p> <p>Newer neighborhoods will be designed to be more attractive, walkable and interesting with better streetscape, site planning, building architecture, signage and lighting.</p> 1 2 3	<p>Eau Claire will offer the <i>Multi-Family Housing Design Guidelines</i> as advice to builders of townhouses and apartments.</p> <p>Sidewalks and trees will be discretionary along local streets.</p> 1 2 3	<p>The requirements of the zoning ordinance will be reduced, especially those that pertain to appearance.</p> 1 2 3

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23	New public infrastructure will set a high standard of design. The City will require that new or rebuilt roads or bridges include aesthetic treatments beyond those provided by WisDOT or the County. 1 2 3	The City will urge WisDOT to build attractive highways and bridges in Eau Claire. 1 2 3	Public facilities such as roads, bridges or buildings not built by the private sector will be designed to meet minimum design requirements. Property owners may contribute financially to aesthetic upgrades of public facilities if desired. 1 2 3
24	Streets will be interconnected with well designed pedestrian and bicycle facilities. 1 2 3	Most streets will be interconnected unless topography or other factors prohibit such connections. 1 2 3	Cul-de-sac streets will be allowed based on the preference of the developer. 1 2 3

Economic Development

	Major issue: What should the City do to promote economic development?		
25	The City will increase its spending to attract and retain higher wage jobs. 1 2 3	The City will continue to work with entities such as the Gateway Industrial Park Corporation and Economic Development Corporation to extend utilities or roads as needed to industrial and office sites. 1 2 3	Business recruitment and retention will be led by the chamber of commerce and similar private organizations. 1 2 3
26	The City will improve infrastructure in both central and perimeter locations to increase the supply of business development sites ready for construction. 1 2 3	The City will promote master planning for the institutional campuses around the downtown medical center and the south side medical center-college campuses. These locations will be encouraged to intensify. 1 2 3	Environmental or aesthetic features will not be allowed to stand in the way of economic progress unless the City had no choice because of state or federal regulations. 1 2 3
27	The City will aggressively acquire, annex and extend services to the most competitive industrial park locations. 1 2 3	Competitive industrial park sites will be controlled through zoning and will be acquired over time by the City, Gateway and/or other economic development partners. Services will be extended to provide the community with a competitive inventory of sites that have an appropriate range of sizes and locations. 1 2 3	The City will support industrial park development by zoning adequate land for future development and will wait for the private sector to acquire and develop industrial parks. 1 2 3

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Existing Neighborhoods

	Major issue: What should the City do to help improve existing neighborhoods?		
28	<p>Public incentives, plans and zoning will be used to direct development to existing neighborhoods and several “activity centers.”</p> <p>Locations of special effort will include the downtown and its fringes, the riverfront, locations near hospitals and colleges, historic commercial nodes, the vicinity of Oakwood Mall and certain subareas in the older residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>Improvements to the existing neighborhoods will continue at their current pace. The City will lead and support private re-investment decisions through planning and public works.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>Improvements to existing neighborhoods will occur as land owners make investment decisions.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
29	<p>The City will increase its spending on neighborhood improvement, building rehabilitation and district redevelopment. Public efforts to encourage housing rehabilitation will be increased.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>Eau Claire will assist redevelopment through plans and zoning.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will rely on property owners to make the best decisions about the current and future use of their holdings.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>
30	<p>The City will amend its zoning ordinance to require traditional neighborhood design features in all new subdivisions.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will publish traditional neighborhood design guidelines and urge its use by local developers.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The private market will determine how best to design new subdivisions.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>

Downtown

	Major issue: What should the City do to enhance downtown revitalization?		
31	<p>The City will complete the North Barstow District redevelopment and riverfront park. Other public improvements in the Historic Waterfront (central business district) will be financed, such as streetscape, plaza and parking improvements, along with land redevelopment, consistent with the <i>Downtown Action Agenda</i>. The remaining industrial, parking and open storage sites along the downtown riverfront will be converted to more appropriate land uses, through City leadership and assistance.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will continue to market the Downtown as a target location for additional professional and corporate offices, convention, hospitality and entertainment facilities, arts and culture, medicine and government.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>	<p>The City will provide services and facilities for Downtown as it does for other parts of the community.</p> <p>The City will not subsidize downtown redevelopment. Downtown revitalization and investment decisions will be left to the private sector.</p> <p>1 2 3</p>

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32	The City will increase its financial support for Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. 1 2 3	The City will continue to fund the operating expenses of Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., and improve streets and utilities as necessary. 1 2 3	Planning, business recruitment and other advocacy functions will be led by privately funded downtown organizations. 1 2 3

Community Facilities			
	Major issue: How involved should Eau Claire be in enhancing community facilities in the city?		
33	Eau Claire will continue to enter into a variety of sharing agreements with local, county, state and federal units of government. 1 2 3	Each unit of government will determine its appropriate set of public facilities and services independently. 1 2 3	Eau Claire will minimize the scope and number of its public services and facilities. 1 2 3
34	A community center with indoor recreational facilities and meeting rooms will be built. 1 2 3	The City will encourage other community organizations to provide for the indoor recreation and meeting room needs. 1 2 3	City buildings will be maintained or newly designed to keep public costs low. 1 2 3
35	Parks will be paired with elementary schools and used to enhance older, established neighborhoods and future districts. 1 2 3	Elementary education will continue to be delivered through improved and expanded schools located in residential neighborhoods. Schools will also be used for many community activities, meetings and events. 1 2 3	Decisions about schools will be the sole responsibility of the school district. 1 2 3
36	The City will challenge and work to change the existing master plan for the Eau Claire Regional Airport to the extent that the airport plan conflicts with the City Comprehensive Plan. 1 2 3	The Eau Claire Regional Airport will be encouraged to plan its facilities cooperatively with the City, keeping in mind the adjacent neighborhood. 1 2 3	The Eau Claire Regional Airport will be allowed to grow with more hangars and industry. 1 2 3

Housing			
	Major issue: What should the City do to stabilize and improve its large stock of older housing?		
37	Housing reinvestment in older neighborhoods will be encouraged by the City adding its own funds to any available state or federal rehabilitation, affordable housing and home ownership programs. 1 2 3	The City will continue to administer its current housing assistance programs such as rent assistance, public housing and subsidized housing for the elderly, and to enforce the Building and Housing codes. 1 2 3	The City will divest itself of all publicly-owned housing authority properties, returning such properties to private ownership. 1 2 3

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38	Each major new residential development project will be required to include a variety of housing types. 1 2 3	The City will help private industry create affordable and attractive market-rate housing by minimizing unnecessary regulations, fees and requirements. 1 2 3	Builders will be allowed to judge what the market considers to be the desired types and mixture of new housing and the appropriate level of amenities and aesthetic enhancements. 1 2 3

Historic Preservation			
	Major issue: What should the City do to encourage owners who "opted-out" of the local historic preservation program to return?		
39	Historic preservation plans will be strengthened, and a local rehabilitation loan and grant program will be created to entice property owners who opted-out of local historic designation to renew their participation in local historic districts. 1 2 3	The most significant historic properties will continue to be protected through the Eau Claire Landmarks Program and the Wisconsin Certified Local Government Program.. 1 2 3	The Eau Claire Landmarks Program will be turned over to a private organization if one can be enlisted; otherwise, it will be discontinued. The City will no longer participate in the Wisconsin Certified Local Government Program. 1 2 3

Expected Consequences

40	Improved local services and facilities.	No major changes in local services and facilities.	Reduced local services and facilities. Many people continue to wish for better public services and facilities.
41	Increased intergovernmental cooperation and use of inter-local agreements.	Continued reliance on statutory provisions for resolving intergovernmental conflict between Eau Claire and adjacent towns.	Reduced intergovernmental conflict between Eau Claire and adjacent towns.
42	Fewer new large-lot houses near Eau Claire in the adjacent Towns.	Continued proliferation of large-lot houses near Eau Claire in the adjacent Towns.	More new large-lot houses near Eau Claire in the adjacent Towns.
43	Eau Claire borders expand consistent with the Comprehensive Plans.	Continued expansion of the Eau Claire borders in response to annexation petitions within the Urban Sewer Area.	Eau Claire borders stay where they are now.
44	Eau Claire captures a larger portion of the region's urban growth.	Urban and semi-rural growth continues to occur in all parts of the region, including the Towns.	More growth occurs in other parts of the region such as Chippewa Falls, Wheaton and Pleasant Valley.
45	More people will be involved in Eau Claire civic affairs.	Same as now.	Fewer people will be involved in Eau Claire civic affairs.
46	Central Eau Claire will become more dense, diverse, walkable, lively and urbane. The best qualities of traditional city design will be followed.	Densities will remain comfortably low, and neighborhoods will be protected from adverse influences such as commercial or industrial development or excess traffic. A variety of housing styles will be offered by builders with some segregated areas of multi-family development.	Densities will remain low. There will be less regulation of existing or future development in the existing neighborhoods.
47	In older neighborhoods, redevelopment will increase densities in certain locations, especially near bus lines or medical centers. Many highly deteriorated housing units will be removed and replaced.	In older neighborhoods, redevelopment will occur consistent with neighborhood plans, older housing will be maintained and densities will remain about the same	In the older neighborhoods, there will be only minor change in pattern or density, and such changes will be entirely the result of private market actions. Deteriorated housing is redeveloped only when it is financially feasible for the private market.

48	Much more new tax base in the City of Eau Claire.	The local property tax base continues the present growth trend but levy rates are held down by the State.	Little or no new tax base in the City of Eau Claire.
49	Greater Eau Claire fiscal strength resulting from planned and regulated fringe growth (in Eau Claire with City sewer and water) helps rejuvenate central neighborhoods, repairs streets and improves parks.	Eau Claire will continue to plan and zone for neighborhood protection, downtown redevelopment and selective revitalization but with a dwindling source of money.	Less property tax revenue is available to Eau Claire to address public problems such as neighborhood or downtown revitalization, street repair or park improvements. At the same time, people have more choice in where to live and whether or how to spend their money on problems or opportunities. Overall, the unfettered market forces generate greater wealth, which individuals may apply to needs as they see fit.